GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:702
ANSWERED ON:22.10.2008
BLINDNESS AMONG CHILDREN
Chaure Shri Bapu Hari

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a): whether a large number of children have become victims of blindness in the country;

(b): if so, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c): the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE(SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) to (c): As per the available information from the blind schools and refractive error studies in India, it is estimated that there are 3.5 lakh blind children due to visual impairment in the age group of 0-15 years. This pool of blind children is constant over about the last five years.

The main reasons for blindness among children in India are:-

Vitamin-A deficiency

Measles

Ophthalmia Neonatorum

Retinopathy of pre-maturity

Cataract

Glaucoma

Injuries

Under the National Programme for Control of Blindness, which is a centrally sponsored scheme, the following steps have been taken to control blindness among children:-

Setting up of Pediatric Ophthalmology Units in Medical Colleges/ Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology/ State level Eye Hospital in NGO and Private Sector

Setting up of Vision Centres in the periphery

Training of doctors and paramedics in eye care in children

School Eye Screening and provision of spectacles for poor children

Non-recurring and recurring grant-in-aid to Eye Banks and Eye Donation Centres

Development of training and IEC material for awareness about childhood blindness

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme.